

WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT



FINANCIAL  
MANAGEMENT



HEALTH  
INFRASTRUCTURE



REGULATIONS,  
LICENSING,  
AND  
INSURANCE



ACCESS  
TO  
CARE



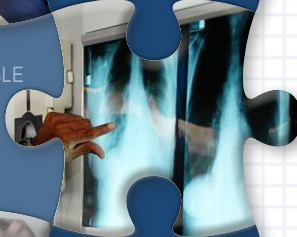
WELLNESS  
AND  
PREVENTION



COMMUNICABLE  
DISEASES



NON-  
COMMUNICABLE  
DISEASES



ORAL  
HEALTH



OTHER  
SOCIAL  
SERVICES



BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH



# 5 Year Health & Social Services Strategic Plan



**Governor Eddie Baza Calvo**  
Territory of Guam

**October 2012**

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**Governor Eddie Baza Calvo**  
Territory of Guam

*This study was prepared under contract with the Government of Guam, with financial support from the Office of Economic Adjustment, Department of Defense. The content reflects the views of the Government of Guam and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Office of Economic Adjustment.*

*The Office of the Governor guided the development of the Five-Year Health and Social Services Strategic Plan for the Territory of Guam. The Strategic Plan is designed to improve the provision of health and social services and their outcomes on Guam. This Strategic Plan provides a detailed look at health and social service issues on Guam today and the provides the policies and actions needed to guide Government of Guam (GovGuam) agencies, federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and individuals to take charge of the future. The accompanying Strategic Plan Resource Document contains an extensive Plan of Action designed to guide the provision of health and social services on Guam.*

*While the Strategic Plan provides a comprehensive plan to address a wide range of Focus Areas, the Governor has identified six Priority Areas that are in need of immediate attention and improvement.*

## **Priorities for Success**

1. Healthy Guam Lifestyles
2. Workforce Development
3. Fiscal Management
4. Enhancing Social Welfare
5. Access to Care
6. Addressing Communicable Diseases



**HAVING  
EVERY  
AGE  
LIVE &  
THINK  
HEALTHIER**

## **Guiding Theme**

*In developing the Strategic Plan, the Health and Social Service Subcommittee was key to its successful development. In preparing the Plan, they were guided by the theme of “HEALTH - Having Every Age Live & Think Healthier.” The term “health” was not used in the medical sense, but a reflection of an overall quality of life.*

## **The Need for a Strategic Plan**

The people of Guam are currently facing a healthcare and social service crisis. There are serious and chronic social and health issues that are taking a heavy toll on the health and wellbeing of the people of Guam. These include both physical health conditions (diabetes, obesity, cancer, and cardiovascular diseases) and mental and social welfare issues (suicide, substance abuse, and family).

## **Overview of the Plan**

Improving the health (medical, social, and mental) of Guam residents requires the identification of health risks and conditions, the promotion and adoption of healthy behaviors and lifestyles, and the availability and efficient utilization of health services. Today, health disparities occur across age groups, ethnic groups, genders, and socioeconomic status. A primary goal of improving health on Guam is the reduction and elimination of health disparities and inequities.

The potential increase in population, both civilian and military, has brought the improvement of these health and social services to the forefront. In its current state, Guam’s healthcare and social service systems are inadequate to serve the people of Guam, and additional growth will exacerbate these problems.

## **Significance of the Plan**

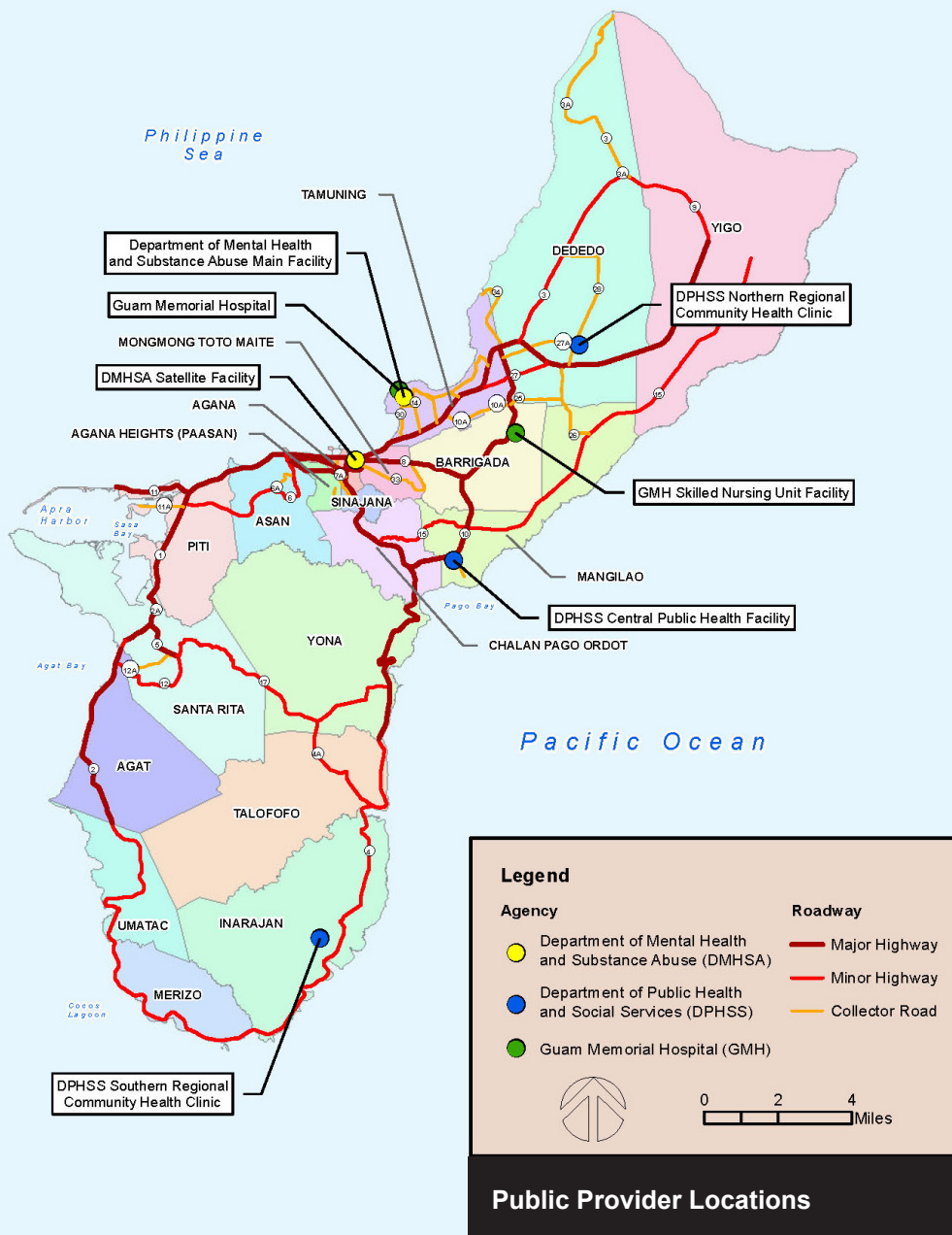
Due to its location relative to other Pacific islands as well as its position between the US mainland and Asian countries, Guam is faced with an opportunity to become both a model for health services in the region and sentinel and early health warning system for the Nation. Guam has an opportunity to become a model for best practices and trends in the pursuit of improved health outcomes.

## **A Collaborative Approach**

This Strategic Plan is intended to encourage and stimulate a consensus-building pathway to improved health and social service outcomes for the people of Guam. The key stakeholders included the Office of the Governor, the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS), the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (DMHSA), various federal and local agencies, private service providers, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and the military. The process has involved extensive coordination and outreach, including interviews with providers and agencies, public surveys, meetings with the Health and Social Services Subcommittee, and community outreach through public health fairs and awareness campaigns.



# Guam's Health and Social Services System



Health and social services are provided through a combination of public and private practitioners and facilities. As shown on the map, the main public facilities are the following:

**The Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS)** is one of the major public providers of healthcare and social services to the island's residents. Medical treatment is provided through the Northern and Southern Community Health Centers, which provide a full range of primary and preventive care services, medical support services, and social services. The Central Public Health Clinic provides an administrative, records, laboratory, and preventative services. DPHSS also operates several smaller locations, such as senior service facilities, on the island.

**Guam Memorial Hospital** is the only hospital on Guam and is the primary source of critical care to Guam and the region.

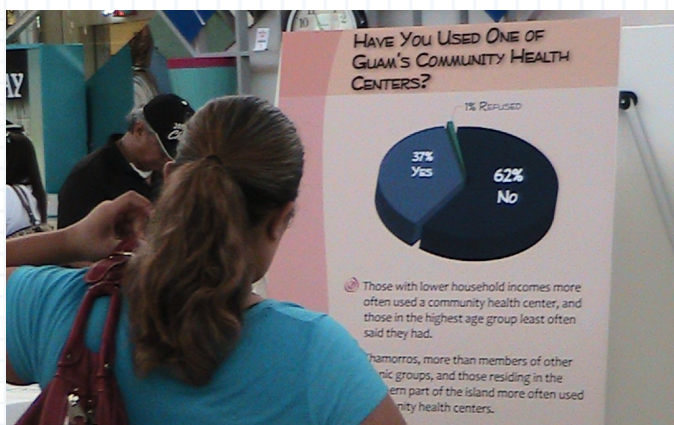
**The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (DMHSA)** provides mental health and social welfare services that complement services provided by DPHSS. In addition to the main facilities, DMHSA also operates smaller support facilities around Guam.

The Guam Community Health Centers' target populations include those who are low income, uninsured, and medically underserved, including:

- children below the age of 11;
- adolescents (including those confined in a correctional facility);
- females of childbearing age with health risk factors;
- pregnant women;
- the elderly;
- homeless and those living in emergency or transitional shelters; and
- citizens of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Marshall Islands, Republic of Belau, and immigrants.







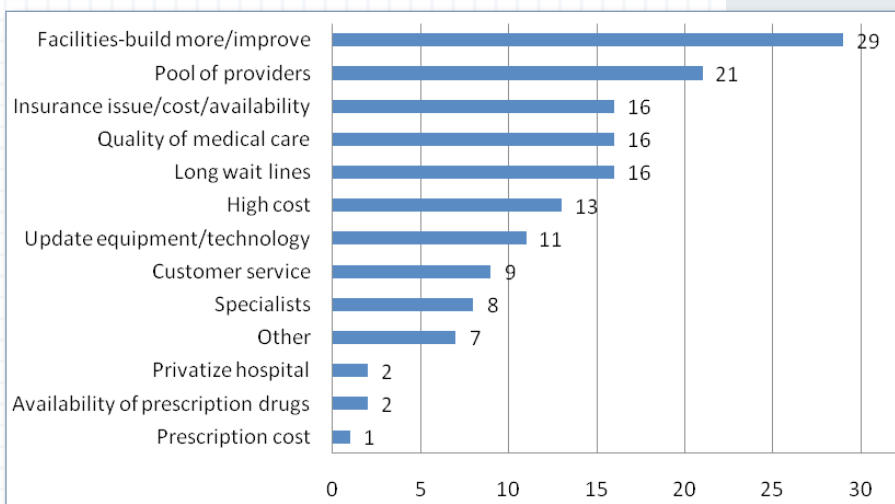
## Public Perception of Guam's Healthcare

One of the initial steps taken in developing this Strategic Plan was obtaining insight into the public perception of Guam's health and social service system. This input was gained as part of two health and social service fairs and a telephone survey of Guam residents.

### Things to Change to Improve the Healthcare System in Guam

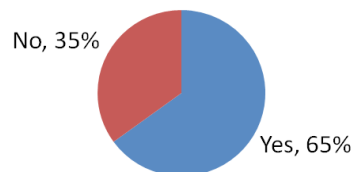
Respondents were asked to name the top three things they would change or fix to improve the healthcare and social service system on Guam. The three most frequently mentioned were:

- improve or build more facilities (29%)
- increase the pool of providers (21%)
- make service more available through insurance or reduction of cost (16%)



## Guam Memorial Hospital

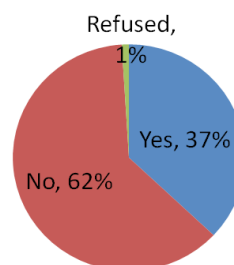
Have you or your family members ever been hospitalized at Guam Memorial Hospital?



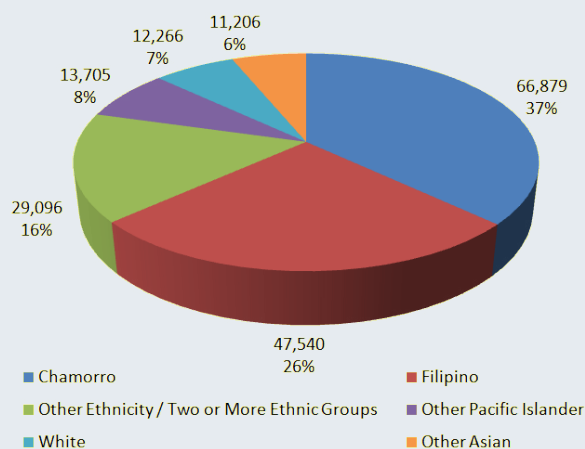
Almost two out of every three respondents (65%) said that they or a member of their family has been hospitalized at Guam Memorial Hospital at some time. Those more often hospitalized at Guam Memorial Hospital are Chamorro and those least often are Caucasian.

## Community Health Center

Have you or your family members used one of the community health centers on Guam?



Thirty-seven percent of the survey respondents indicated their family has used one of the community health centers on Guam.



In order to assess the status of health and social services on Guam, it is necessary to understand the complexities of the many contributing factors. Health status is typically assessed in terms of epidemiology, and health services available and accessed; however, the focus of public health has expanded to include environmental, social and behavioral, and occupational factors. Many quality of life indicators affect a person's health and social welfare, and a person's physical and mental health condition in turn plays a significant role in one's overall quality of life.

Another important component is an area's demographic profile. The data and growth trends presented here (and further detailed in Section 2 of the Strategic Plan's Resource Document) set the background for analysis and needs assessments that were conducted to develop the Strategic Plan.

## Guam's Current Demographic

According to the recently released 2010 population counts from the US Census, Guam's overall population has increased by only 2.9% over the past decade. The municipalities in which the most growth was experienced over the past decade were Mongmong-Toto-Maite (+16.8%), Chalan Pago-Ordot (+15.2%), and Mangilao (+14.1%) while the southern villages of Inarajan, Umatac, Agat and Merizo revealed a population decline (of -25.5%, -11.8%, -13.1%, -14.5%, respectively).

Demographic data is important in the characterization of at-risk populations and in the assessment of medical and social service facilities on Guam.

**Guam's population is a diverse mix of people from ethnicities based in the Western Pacific.** People of Chamorro ethnicity account for over one-third of the

population, while those of Filipino ethnicity make up slightly more than one-quarter of the population. The remaining population is a mix of other Pacific Islanders (including people of Carolinian, Chuukese, Kosraean, Marshallese, Palauan, Pohnpeian, and Yapese ethnicities), other Asian (including people of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean ethnicities), Caucasian, two or more ethnic groups, or other ethnicity. The pie chart above illustrates the breakdown of population by ethnicity in 2010.

## Guam's age demographic is generally younger than the US overall.

In 2010, just over 50% of Guam's population was under age 30, while the US Census estimated approximately 41% of the total US population was under age 30. The chart on the next page shows the breakdown of Guam's population by age group, separated by male and female. The figure also identifies the same age breakdown equivalent for the total US population. While the US population is "greying" with a baby boomer demographic, Guam has a large population in the younger age cohorts. From a health prospective, this points out stronger demands for obstetricians, pediatricians, nutrition programs for children and families, and the potential to have a bigger impact on lifestyles through education.

In 2010, Navy personnel and their dependents made up approximately 50% of the total military population on Guam, and the Air Force made up roughly 34%, with the remainder being Army, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps. With a total 2010 population of 13,459, military personnel and their dependents accounted for slightly over seven percent of Guam's population.

The **proposed military buildup** on Guam, if it occurs, will increase the military's presence on Guam and bring additional personnel and dependents, primarily as part of

the Marine Corps. Taking place separately from what is commonly referred to as the “military buildup,” Andersen Air Force Base will also receive additional personnel. These Air Force numbers are not discussed in terms of the military buildup population increase.

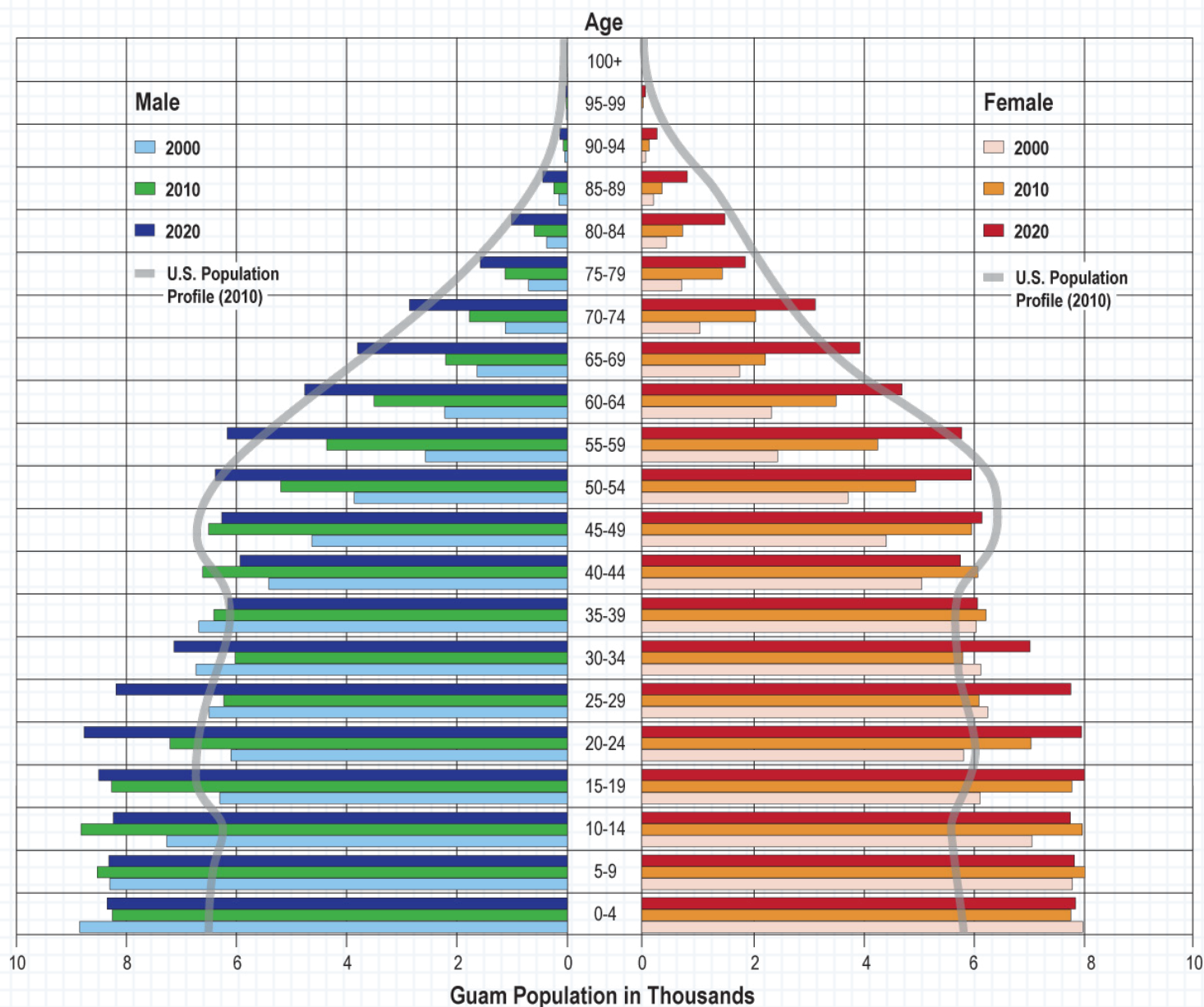
The military buildup may also be accompanied by a large increase in the civilian population resulting from off-island workers coming to work on construction projects or to otherwise support the military buildup. This large immigrant population from the region will bring with it additional challenges and demands on the Guam health and social service system.

The last piece of Guam’s population to consider is its **visitor population (tourism)**. Guam had approximately 1,196,523 visitors in 2010, with 99% of visitors arriving by air. In 2010,

approximately 75% of the total visitors who arrived on Guam by air were from Japan.

Guam’s role as a destination for tourists and a waypoint for travelers in the region is an important consideration relative to communicable disease control and the provision of health and social services to meet the needs of both the permanent and transient workforce and visitors to Guam.

Strengthened relationship and greater collaborative efforts between individuals, local communities, organizations, and state and tribal agencies are key to the facilitation of improved health outcomes of Guam. This Strategic Plan highlights the key issues and presents the objectives and actions needed to improve the future and realize a healthier Guam.





# Priority One: Healthy Guam Lifestyles



## Primary Issues of Concern:

- People are choosing food and beverage options that are convenient and quick instead of nutritious.
- Cultural traditions and practices, including the traditional diet of plant foods and seafood, have changed to be dominated by processed foods.
- Obesity has increased as a result of a combination of physical inactivity and changing diets.
- Smoking among adults remains high, contributing to increased risk for chronic diseases.

## Background

Adopting a healthy lifestyle through nutrition, exercise, and awareness is the first step in reducing health disparities, avoiding sickness related medical care visits, and overcoming the overall healthcare crisis.

A healthy lifestyle consists of getting optimal nutrition, achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, exercising and staying fit, eliminating risky activities and behaviors (smoking, excessive drinking, etc.), and taking steps to prevent chronic diseases. Unhealthy lifestyles play a significant role in contributing to chronic non-communicable diseases such as heart conditions, stroke, diabetes, and several forms of cancer, which are all prevalent among the Guam population.

Nutrition and dietary choices have a significant impact on one's overall health and on the burden of preventable illnesses and premature deaths. Nutrition assistance is currently available to school-aged children through low and no-cost meal options offered at public schools; however, additional funding for these programs is contingent upon increased enrollment levels.

Regular physical activity is one of the most proven and powerful methods of wellness promotion and disease prevention. The problem of physical inactivity is rampant both in the US and on Guam, and the level of physical activity performed by Guam high school students is severely lacking, causing great concern for the health of this generation.

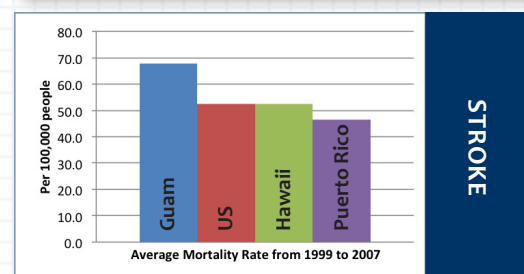
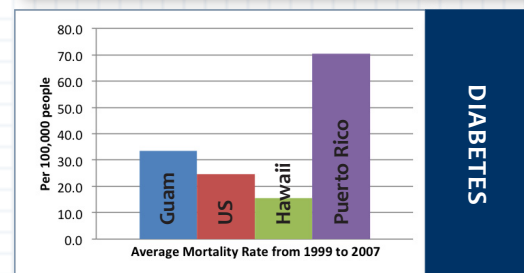
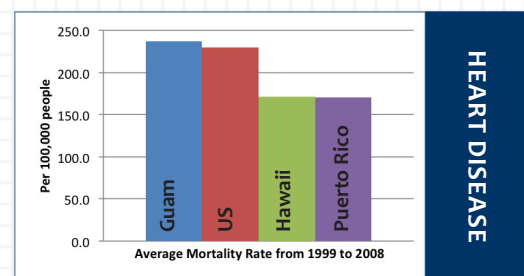
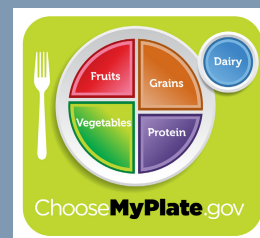
Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is a long-term lifestyle approach that encompasses healthy eating, regular physical activity, and balancing caloric intake. Being overweight or obese has become common throughout the US and on Guam, with over half of the adult population throughout Guam, the US, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico reported as being overweight or obese.

Additional risk factors that detract from the ability to lead a healthy lifestyle include smoking, substance abuse, and engaging in other risky behaviors. The prevalence of smoking on Guam remains high, with just over one quarter of adults reported as regular smokers, which is approximately 50% higher than that of the US. These unhealthy choices are also linked with behavioral health problems, such as suicides and other acts of violence.

Guam is afflicted with a range of diseases that are strongly influenced by lifestyle choices. Top concerns include high mortality rates due to heart disease, diabetes, and stroke.

## Benchmarks

Enrollment in the National School Lunch Program is a factor in the amount of funding provided by the federal government. An average of 17,000 children receive low or no-cost lunches daily; however, only 7,000 children take advantage of free breakfasts available in Guam's public schools. Enrollment needs to be tracked in order to maximize available assistance.



## Objectives:

**G**uam will reduce healthcare costs for Guamanians by increasing awareness of the importance of leading and living healthy lifestyles, including the importance of physical activity and making informed decisions about nutritional choices.

**G**uam will lead by example to encourage healthy lifestyles amongst people of all ages by hosting organized events and partnerships with other stakeholder groups to enhance education and knowledge on healthy lifestyle choices.

**G**uam will increase participation in federally funded programs in order to maximize potential funding that is based on enrollment and utilization.

Adopting a healthy lifestyle will result in long-term benefits, through improved health, reduced costs, and overall quality of life.

### GovGuam Actions

- Promote and sponsor regular “Physical Activity and Nutrition Events.” The purpose of these events will be to educate the public and will incorporate fun activities such as team building exercises and games that can be played at home. Activities should require physical exertion but be enjoyable enough to not be seen as required exercise.
- Reach out to families of school aged children regarding the availability of free or reduced cost breakfast and lunch options at school.
- Develop additional data sources that allow for the measurement of trends to improve program planning and evaluation.

### NGOs / Private Actions

- Share data / information with GovGuam agencies relative to patient cases and / or new technologies to allow for measuring progress.
- Develop a public awareness campaign using PSAs and press releases to educate the public of healthy lifestyles, choices, and available resources.
- Participate in national programs that provide training to food service providers, medical professionals, and school physical activity programs.

### Federal Actions

- Encourage continued healthy lifestyles education and promotion with culturally relevant resources and guidance.
- Continue to support funding of local government programs such as food nutrition assistance.
- Improve outreach to GovGuam agencies to increase the awareness of the need for increased participation in federal programs in order to increase financial award.

### Individual and Family Actions

- Seek preventative care to decrease the likelihood of urgent medical conditions or the onset of disease.
- Recognize unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, drinking, and lack of physical activity and take action to eliminate these risks.
- Incorporate physical activity and healthier food options into both family and community events and fiestas.

## Priority Two: Workforce Development



### Primary Issues of Concern:

- An insufficient number of medical practitioners on Guam constrains the ability to deliver much needed medical care.
- Improvements to medical licensure requirements are needed in order avoid interruptions in credential and licensure status.
- There are a lack of advanced alternatives, such as the use of telemedicine technologies, that could supplement the current healthcare workforce.

### Background

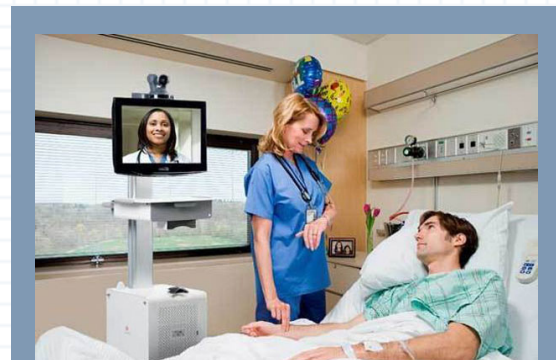
The quality of healthcare for Guam, or any country, is dependent on a variety of variables; however, one of the most important is the people involved in delivering these services. The overall healthcare workforce consists of both administrative personnel and trained medical practitioners, such as nurses, doctors, dentists, and allied health professionals.

Medical practitioners provide much needed diagnoses and treatment plans including medications and vaccines to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and to design patient management plans when dealing with chronic and acute maladies.

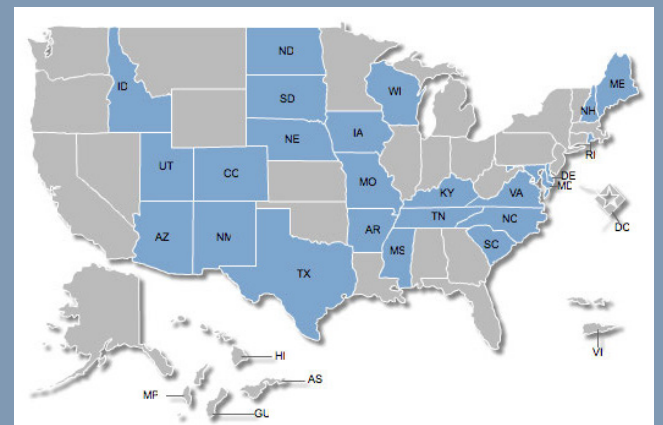
Guam's healthcare system is currently constrained by a limited number of medical practitioners that can provide an optimal level of care. **There is a severe shortage of doctors, nurses, dentists and allied health professionals, both for meeting the needs of Guam residents and the region.** This shortage is in part a result of wage disparities, with Guam's medical professionals being paid on average 12.5% below the US average for occupations reported to the US Department of Labor.

Currently, the administrative framework requires renewal of licenses by all medical professionals to occur within only two months during the year, in June and September. This process is time consuming and costly due to the current number of medical professionals and limited staff.

The current process for recruiting and retaining qualified medical practitioners does not consider alternatives relative to **telemedicine**, reciprocity agreements, and issuance of Guam medical licenses. The process for off-island medical professionals to obtain a Guam medical license contributes to delays and lost opportunities for both Guam and off-island medical professionals.



*The use of telemedicine allows patients to have direct access to physicians through web-based technology, regardless of location.*



*There are 24 states that operate under the Nurse Licensure Compact Agreement. Guam has the potential to drastically increase the number of licensed nurses by accepting and joining this Agreement.*



## Objectives:

**G**uam will facilitate the provision of quality healthcare by taking actions that support increases in the pool of qualified healthcare workers.

**G**uam will seek to improve the quality of care through alternative methods, increased awareness, education, and training of all professionals in the healthcare industry.

**G**uam will expand the learning opportunities that are required to obtain and maintain medical registration and licensure.

Over 600 medical professionals on Guam require license renewal every other year. This renewal process is currently managed by two staff members.

Only five other states in the United States require 100 CME credits every two years for medical license renewal.

## GovGuam Actions

- Initiate acceptance into the Nurse Licensure Compact Agreement to increase the number of nurses on Guam in the short term.
- Reevaluate the compensation of medical professionals in order to be competitive with mainland states and attract more qualified healthcare professionals to Guam.
- Collaborate with the Guam Medical Boards to lower the CME credits to enable quicker license applications turnarounds and enhance opportunities for licensure reciprocity with other states.

## Federal Actions

- Support and facilitate the Territory of Guam to be accepted in the Nurse Licensure Compact.
- Provide a federal trainer to assist in training Guam licensing boards on regulatory and statutory policies, and provide ongoing support.
- Continue to provide financial assistance and support for workforce development and assistance programs.

## NGOs / Private Actions

- Sponsor healthcare workforce mentoring programs that establish and promote relationships amongst Guam's healthcare students and health professionals.
- Make medical training more accessible to Guam's underserved populations through scholarships and assistance that require residency and retention on Guam.
- Expand the availability of training courses and CME opportunities for healthcare professionals, both through traditional methods (classrooms) and through the use of technology (webinar based training) using culturally relevant content.

# Priority Three: Fiscal Management



## Primary Issues of Concern:

- *Inadequate information management infrastructure contributes to substandard financial reporting.*
- *The inability to collect payment for services rendered contributes to the widespread problems associated with financial management and debt of GMHA, the governing body of GMH.*
- *DPHSS's and DMHSA's shortfall is due to operating with increasing expenditures and slow transfer payments from federal assistance programs and insufficient revenues.*

## Background

An effective public health and social services system requires collaboration and input from an extensive network of public and private stakeholders as well as a supportive policy and regulatory infrastructure. All of these components are reliant on the availability of funding and resources as well as fiscal responsibility.



The economy has a major impact on the healthcare delivery system. This includes the availability of employer-based healthcare coverage, funding for public healthcare programs, and federal support initiatives and grants. Funding for public health services are generally limited by available revenues and competing public priorities. For example, during economic down-turns, enrollment in publicly funded health programs such as Medicare and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program grow while state revenues that are needed to support them decline.

**A solid and transparent framework for financial accounting and reporting** is a critical component of effective implementation of public healthcare, as well as all other public services.

DPHSS and DMHSA are operating with significant shortfalls.

DPHSS's operating expenses were identified as the single most contributing factor for its financial weakness. DMHSA's March 2010 injunction caused GovGuam to pay out millions in remuneration contributing to its financial inability to deliver quality healthcare on Guam.

DPHSS's and DMHSA's bottom-line suffers from the inability of the agencies to account for program expenditures in a standard manner that would better facilitate and enable

a smooth transfer of federal subsidies and assistance to Guam. The lack of a standard process contributes to delayed repayment of the Compact Impact Aid and other federally-funded programs.

GMH receives on average a reimbursement rate of 60% due to providing medical services and treatment based on patient need, not ability to pay.

Guam Memorial Hospital's (GMH) single biggest problem in the provision of quality healthcare is insufficient capital needed to cover major equipment and operating expenditures. GMH provides services based on need, not the ability to pay. This inability to collect patient revenues prevents the restocking of pharmaceuticals and the operating capital to procure much needed equipment and supplies such as disease detection equipment (e.g., x-ray machines and laboratory supplies) and computer software.



## Objectives:

**G**uam will facilitate an integrated financial management network enabling transparency and future investment that ultimately improves overall quality of healthcare on Guam.

**G**uam will reduce the gap between operating expenditures and revenues generated by healthcare services and facilities.

GMH receives on average a reimbursement rate of 60% due to providing medical services and treatment based on patient need, not ability to pay.

## GovGuam Actions

- Hire a qualified Chief Financial Officer (CFO) that provides fiscal management and accountability for DPHSS and DMHSA programs and resources.
- Implement a standard financial management system and procedures that is used by all GovGuam agencies, providing for greater fiscal accountability and transparency, and simplified reporting to federal agencies.
- Outsource revenue generating functions that can help alleviate the financial burden on GMH and other public health centers, including pharmacy operations, billing and accounts receivable, and IT support.

## Federal Actions

- Provide federal program management assistance, training, and education to Guam grant and program administrators, i.e. Compact Impact Aid Program.
- Continue to support and facilitate federal financial assistance to the Government of Guam.
- Provide GovGuam with model practices and procedures used for healthcare management by other states and agencies.

## NGOs / Private Actions

- Provide outsourcing capabilities to DPHSS, DMHSA, and GMH to the extent possible such as procurement review and evaluation, billing and collections.
- Integrate medical billing and coding into the current college and university course offerings.



# Priority Four: Enhancing Social Welfare



## Primary Issues of Concern:

- Data relevant to those with disability is not tracked on a standard or national basis, thus posing a challenge to evaluating conditions and identifying achievement milestones.
- Data sets are incomplete and do not capture all incidents of violence to gain a full perspective of the problem.
- There is a general lack of awareness and acceptance of those with disabilities, mental health disorders, and those who have been the victim of violence and abuse.

## Background

Social services are often viewed separately from physical healthcare; however, the need for social services is directly correlated to impaired physical health as well as human behaviors that influence both physical and mental health. Improving behavioral health and other social services are critical to improving the overall health of Guam residents and the region.



### Disabled

Approximately 10% of the world's population and 5% of Guam's population is living with a disability. It is estimated that many more are **unaware or unwilling to acknowledge their disability**. This makes it difficult to assess the concern of disabilities in its entirety, both physical and mental, in its entirety on Guam because there is a **data inventory shortfall**. Without

adequate data, it is difficult to diagnose and provide the necessary treatment and services to those in need. Economically disadvantaged population groups are more prone to develop a disability due to lifestyle factors, such as inadequate nutrition. Those who develop a disability are more prone to financial hardship, potentially resulting in poverty and even homelessness.

### Behavioral / Mental Health

If left untreated, poor mental health may lead to poor behavioral health. Since mental health is thought-based and behavioral health is action-based, mental health issues can often go unrecognized in early stages. As mental health issues prolong, one's inclination to engage in destructive behaviors such as alcohol and substance abuse increases as does the likelihood of committing acts of violence against oneself or another person. Behavioral health is an integral aspect to the overall health of a community and to healthcare planning and can be **addressed through treatment, education, and advocacy**.



### Family and Children

Domestic violence and violence against women is an identifiable and significant issue that affects the health and wellbeing of a large portion of the world's population; however, **empirical data on incidence, prevalence, and consequences is severely lacking**.

The homeless population on Guam has been on the rise and grown an alarming 42% over the past year

Guam's existing support programs offer individual support or advocacy, transitional housing, group support or advocacy, emergency shelter, advocacy related to housing office/landlord, and job training/employment assistance. The programs surveyed on Guam report a critical shortage of funds and staff as a barrier to providing adequate levels of care.

## Objectives:

**G**uam will improve the availability of accurate data on social disorders and services to facilitate program improvement and additional support.

**G**uam will strive to improve the quality of life of all persons with a disability, mental and behavioral health condition, and the underserved, such as families and children.

**G**uam will enhance the overall healthcare system through inclusion and emphasis on improving both understanding and treatment of social health and welfare.

### GovGuam Actions

- Work with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to participate in data collection and reporting of mental health conditions on Guam in order to identify measurable health targets.
- Utilize non-profit entities to increase awareness of mental health disorders and services available.
- Seek assistance from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to build on existing healthcare professional training opportunities.
- Build partnerships with NGOs and Private businesses to provide training and hire persons with disabilities.
- Continue to develop community-based treatment.

### NGOs / Private Actions

- Expand on existing University of Guam data surveillance efforts and inventories to include social health conditions, with assistance from CDC.
- Develop a social services awareness campaign utilizing various methods of outreach that are sensitive to people of all ages, ethnicity, and gender. This awareness program would provide information on how to recognize disabilities and violence as well as existing programs and available resources to help.
- Incorporate social welfare and mental health concerns into the overall health evaluation conducted by medical practitioners.
- Collaborate with GovGuam agencies to provide social services such as transportation and Caregiver Support Programs, and support the hiring of those with disabilities.

### Federal Actions

- Enhance current mental healthcare facilitation and treatment training through the use of on-site trainers that reach large groups of healthcare professionals on Guam.
- Continue efforts to improve DMHSA facilities and services through grants supporting facility development, treatment, and staffing.
- Provide ongoing support for culturally sensitive awareness and education about mental health, disabilities, and other social services.

### Individual and Family Actions

- Seek help and attention immediately when it is thought that a disability, mental illness, or family violence is occurring.
- Foster healthy lifestyles and personal relationships to prevent the need for social services.
- Share individual unique perspectives through community wellness groups and mentoring programs.

# Priority Five: Access to Care



## Primary Issues of Concern:

- GMH is mandated to provide medical services to all residents, regardless of ability to pay.
- The quantity and quality of medical services available is inadequate.
- Lack of viable transportation options and location and accessibility of GMH and other healthcare facilities makes access to healthcare for many Guamanians daunting causing them to not seek care.
- Lack of general awareness of programs available to the public for free healthcare services and screenings.

## Background

Promoting and ensuring good health involves the maximization of healthcare accessibility for the population served. **Accessibility to healthcare is affected by several factors, including the availability of healthcare services and a patient’s ability to pay for those services.**

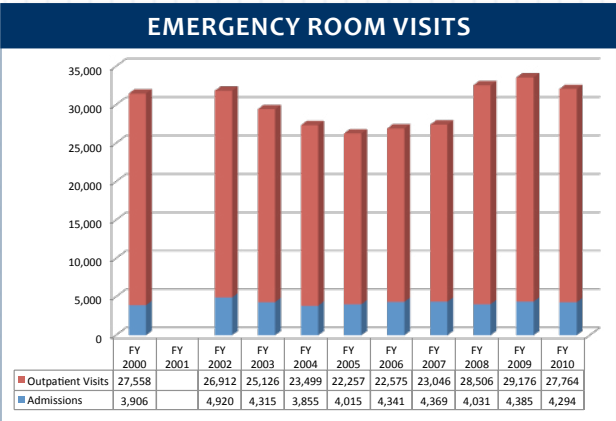
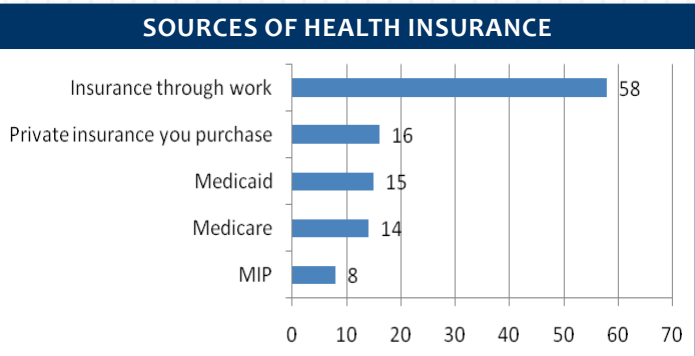
Health and social services are currently available to Guam residents and visitors alike through Guam Memorial Hospital (GMH), several public health clinics, and numerous private providers. GMH is currently Guam’s only provider for civilian emergency and acute care services and is overburdened by high patient loads, particularly those seeking routine care in emergency facilities; a lack of sufficiently trained medical staff; and its requirement to serve as a regional hospital to Compact Impact Agreement populations.

Approximately 86% of all visits to the GMH Emergency Room over the past ten years have been outpatient visits that did not require admission to the hospital.

**Accessibility to the hospital and public health centers is constrained by location and insufficient transportation options.** These centers are critical to serving low income, uninsured, and medically underserved populations. There are some existing programs that provide transportation services to those in need of care; however, they are limited and require improvement to reach a greater portion of the population. Treatment options for certain conditions are also constrained by insufficient equipment and associated trained staff, forcing patients to incur additional medical expenses to travel off-island. This greatly increases the cost of care and renders treatment completely inaccessible to some patients.

**In addition to physical accessibility, possessing healthcare insurance is a major factor in determining the ability to access care.** The majority of those with health insurance obtain coverage through employer-based programs. Those without private insurance depend on Medicaid or MIP coverage. The number of Guam Medicaid participants has steadily increased each year, with an overall increase of 30% between 2004 and 2010. The percentage of participants that are Compact Impact patients has also increased, from 17% of those served in 2004 to 20% in 2010 (DPHSS, 2011), indicating a growing regional dependence on medical care on Guam. The two most common concerns of Guam residents is the belief that the availability of sufficient treatment services is lacking and the cost to obtain treatment is too high. The increasing in-migration of people from Micronesia who require health services is of concern because of the cost to provide, as well as the demand on already constrained systems and services.

## Benchmarks





## Objectives:

**G**uam will improve quality and access to care by supplementing centralized sources of medical care with alternative delivery of care options.

**G**uam will seek to increase enrollment in both public and private health insurance programs.

**G**uam will provide public health information that is responsive and sensitive to cultural, linguistic, and other specialized needs of the population and are universally available to all Guam residents.

### GovGuam Actions

- Implement a mobile health clinic program that would increase accessibility to routine and sick medical care and reduce the number of people that do not seek medical care because of their inability to travel to health centers.
- Establish a visiting nurse program that would provide in home services to each village on Guam.
- Establish a health hotline staffed by nurses and other qualified medical personnel. The hotline will be staffed by volunteer practitioners and nurses and monitored by DPHSS.
- Provide applicable program educational pamphlets to NGOs and Private Practitioners to encourage awareness of public programs and assistance and increase enrollment in programs that are supported through federal assistance.

### NGOs / Private Actions

- Support GovGuam's medical hotline by encouraging private practitioners to volunteer their services and / or facilities and equipment through community partnership events.
- Partner with DPHSS and DMHSA to plan "back-to-school" health education outreach efforts as part of the school registration process for parents and children.
- Provide information to parents of school-aged children regarding Medicaid-eligibility.

### Federal Actions

- Support the enhancement of medical services and alternatives for accessing healthcare through applicable healthcare funding mechanisms that support capital improvements, such as facility upgrades and the procurement of new equipment.
- Recognize and mandate uncompensated nurse hotline staff support time as required training hours for Continuing Medical Education credits and community service hours.
- Assist GovGuam staff in understanding public health insurance guidelines and reimbursement requirements.

### Individual and Family Actions

- Seek assistance for medical care expenses through local government programs.
- Visit your local family doctor's office for information about additional public healthcare services available to all Guamanians.
- To the extent possible, attain healthcare coverage to lower costs of medical expenditures.

# Priority Six: Addressing Communicable Diseases



## Primary Issues of Concern:

- Without a Level 2 lab, more people go off-island for testing, which results in a greater potential for exposure to other diseases that could be brought back to Guam unknowingly.
- The rates of reported tuberculosis cases on Guam are eight times higher than the US total, and have been trending upwards. The current tuberculosis morbidity rate on Guam is 50 times the goal set by CDC’s Healthy People 2020 Plan.
- The ability to stop the spread of disease is constrained by the inability to isolate infected individuals and the lack of isolation rooms and capabilities.
- Treatment options are limited by economic factors, the availability of medical supplies, and one’s ability to obtain medical care.

## Background

Communicable (infectious) diseases are those that are contracted through transmission from one being (human and animal alike) to another. Many communicable diseases are preventable through vaccinations or lifestyle choices. Monitoring their activity can assist in determining where preventative measures should be taken and which populations may be most susceptible to impaired health conditions.

The main components of enhancing public health through the prevention and control of communicable diseases include:

- Education,
- Vaccination (prevention),
- Identification (testing / treatment),

- Isolation (keeping infected individuals apart from the population),
- Surveillance (monitoring and recording), and
- Treatment

Communicable diseases that have historically affected the Guam population the most severely and are currently of the greatest concern include:

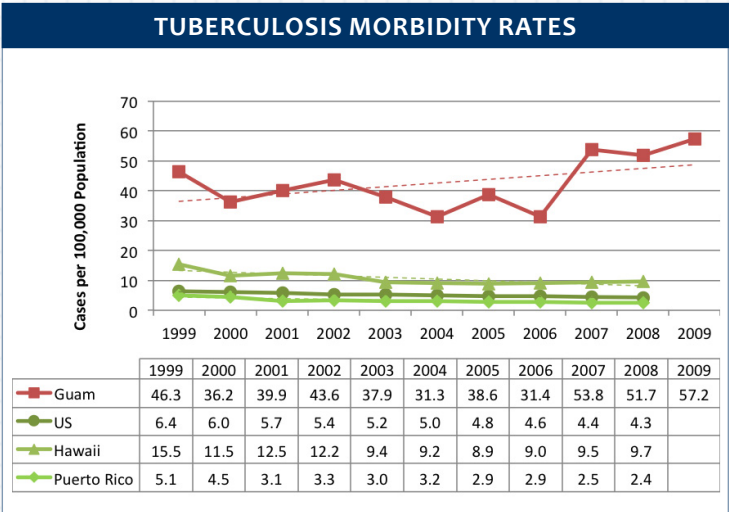
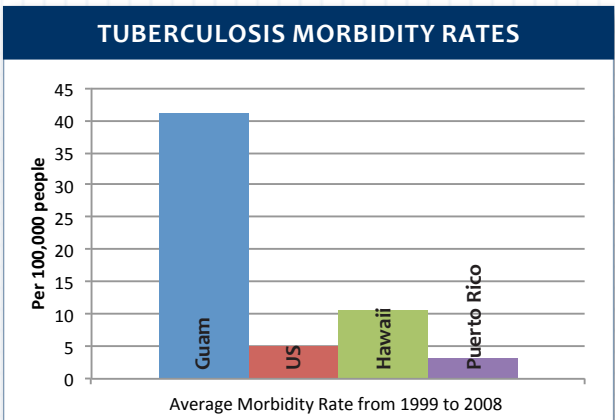
- Tuberculosis
- Hepatitis
- Influenza
- mumps,
- salmonellosis
- sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)

STDs are the most common communicable diseases on Guam.

Guam serves as the medical hub for the region, providing both testing and treatment for Guam and the Western Pacific. Testing abilities are constrained due to inadequate equipment such as state of the art x-ray machines and the lack of a Level 2 Lab that would enable proper identification of disease. Once a disease has onset, individuals who require treatment may be unable to seek medical care or not be aware of the severity of the medical condition.

Many communicable diseases now have vaccines that can prevent the disease from occurring in inoculated individuals and medicines that can cure an illness, ease the symptoms of an illness, and reduce the potential for the spread of illness.

## Benchmarks



## Objectives:

**G**uam will expand on-island testing capabilities that allow a greater portion of the population affordable healthcare options.

**G**uam will expand treatment capabilities that allow a greater portion of the population affordable healthcare options.

**G**uam will continue and improve outreach efforts that educate communities about communicable diseases, how they are transmitted and how they can be prevented through vaccines and other healthy practices.

### GovGuam Actions

- Work with Office of the Regional Health Administrator and CDC in Region IX to provide enhanced federal funding for identification (through a Level 2 Lab) and treatment (through adequate supplies (i.e., medicines) of communicable diseases (TB, STDs, etc.) that increase on a per capita basis.
- Obtain adequate funding and staff for the Tuberculosis Program to combat the increasing level of antibiotic-resistant strains of TB being detected on Guam, with priority items identified as state of the art radiographic (x-ray) equipment and TB isolation room(s).
- Improve vaccination rates among youth and school children through the use of use WIC clinics as a point of access to identify children in need of immunizations.

### NGOs / Private Actions

- Provide information on the importance of vaccinations for children, adolescents, and adults as part of employee health programs.
- Private practitioners, community organizations and educational institutions should sponsor and participate in community events that promote healthy lifestyles and make immunizations more available to the community.
- Distribute informational packets at community centers, educational institutions, libraries, and other public facilities regarding the availability of vaccinations and the educational materials that address methods of transmission of communicable diseases.

### Federal Actions

- Coordinate military buildup that would increase the population and possibly introduce new diseases to Guam with Guam and local communities.
- Provide support to GovGuam that would enable improved treatment capabilities, particularly addressing the need for a Level 2 Lab and isolation rooms.
- Provide GovGuam educational materials currently used by CDC and other federal healthcare organizations and non-profit groups.

### Individual and Family Actions

- Obtain immunization status of self and family from healthcare providers and keep personal immunization records updated and available.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of communicable diseases.
- Maintain proper hygiene to avoid illness and avoid contact with others when experiencing symptoms of a communicable disease.



